

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Use of the Passive Voice

Please be more sensitive to the use of the passive voice in SGI-USA publications. In the Dec. 17, 1999, *World Tribune*, p. 2, Mr. Ted Morino's article is titled "The Key To Having Our Wishes Fulfilled." I totally agree that through faith, I can fulfill all of my wishes. I also believe that there are many mystical things that happen in the process. But I don't believe that some other entity or force fulfills them. That idea would include the mistaken notion that this practice is magic. It is not.

The phrase *I have my wishes fulfilled* makes the inference that someone else fulfills my wishes, not me. Compare it to the phrase *I fulfill my wishes*. The power is mine, the results are my responsibility. The fact that I rely on my faith, practice and study to help me make my wishes come true does not detract from effectiveness or responsibility. And it does not mean that I call down heavenly powers to do my bidding.

Mr. Morino's use of the phrase *I will leave it up to the Gohonzon* does not mean that one whit of the action I must take should be neglected, I believe. Rather, I can leave my worrying and unanswerable (mystical) questions to the Gohonzon with complete confidence.

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Regarding 'Soka'

I am writing in response to Eileen McGruder's letter (Jan. 21 *World Tribune*) about the SGI-USA's use of the name *Soka Spirit movement* to refer to the subject of the temple rather than an English name. *Soka* is Japanese for value-creation. But in the history and tradition of the Soka Gakkai, the word has a deeper meaning. *Soka* is the spirit of President Makaguchi, who at the cost of his own life, stood up to Japan's military fascism and declared the need to protect the sanctity of life. *Soka* is the spirit of President Toda, who despite failing health and financial ruin, dedicated the rest of his life to rebuilding the Soka Gakkai and propagating Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism throughout Japan. *Soka* is the spirit of President Ikeda, who despite personal sacrifice, attacks and threats, has dedicated his entire life to fulfilling his mentor's vision that the Daishonin's Buddhism would be spread throughout the world. It is because of that *Soka Spirit* that we in America are able to practice.

There currently is no English word nor phrase profound enough to adequately convey the level of conviction and determination personified by the lives of these three men or the lives of thousands of pioneer SGI members. As American Buddhists, to deny our Japanese roots would be tantamount to denying our parentage, or denying the seeds from which we sprang.

In her letter, Ms. McGruder notes that the SGI-USA has "kept some Japanese terminology for the sake of tradition and/or convenience, but neither is at stake here." However, I disagree. What's at stake *is* tradition—the tradition of the Daishonin's

Buddhism to struggle against authority; to continue to expand what President Ikeda has referred to as “a people’s movement” of peace, education and culture in accordance with the vision of Nichiren.

It is the *Soka* Spirit that best exemplifies that struggle. The red in the American Stars and Stripes is stained with Native-American, European, African, Chinese, Mexican, Puerto Rican and Japanese blood. Those stars and stripes are woven together through an intermingling of ethnic and cultural traditions, which have created the rich heritage that is known as “American tradition” today.

With a spirit of tolerance, as Buddhists, it is imperative that we be at the forefront of any movement that recognizes the immense contributions that all people have made to our nation. That is also the *Soka* Spirit.

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